

SUBJECTION

FOR

Conscience-fake

ASSERTED:

IN A

SERMON

Preached at

COVENT-GARDEN-Church,

December the Sixth, 1674.

By *Gilbert Burnet.*

L O N D O N,

Printed for R. Royson, Bookseller to his most Sacred
Majesty, at the Angel in *Amen-Corner*, 1675.

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COLLECTION

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R O M. 13. 5.

*Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not
only for Wrath, but for Conscience-
sake.*

IT is the *great* and just Glory of our most
holy Faith, that it is no less the Interest
than the Duty of all men to embrace it,
and live according to its Precepts : For if we
examine either the Complex of the whole Chri-
stian Religion in gross, or the several parcels
of it, and *the Duties it enjoyns ; we must confess* all
the Laws of Solon and Lycutgus, of Greece and

A

Rome

Marth. 7.
12.

Rome come infinitely short of the excellent provisions it gives for the Peace of Mankind, and the Order of Societies : So that it plainly appears, the Author of it was a Lover of Men. What Rule of Justice can match that of *doing to others what we would have others do to us*, which is so home, so easily remembred, and readily applied, that no wonder the very Heathens admired it ? But, not content with the strictest rigors of Justice, our Saviour hath also obliged us to the supererogatings (if I may so speak) of Charity, and hath commanded us to love one another as Brethren ; nor must our brotherly Love be confined within the narrow bounds of a Party, but extend it self to all Men whom it takes within its Verge, forgiving Injuries and loving Enemies. And for the security of Order and Government, what means are like those our Religion offers ? This is even confessed by its declared Enemies, who charge it as the contrivance of designing men for securing their Power and Authority ; and indeed all the Arts of Statesmen, the Cunning of Policy, the Closeness of Councils, the Exactness of Intelligence, the strength of Armies or Navies, the strictness of Guards, regular Fortifications, great Treasures and vast Magazines, are but Ineffectual Means, compared to this which

which Religion offers for the security of a State, by setting up Conscience as a Sentinel to watch in every man's Breast, that shall not let pass through it one thought contrary to the Peace of the Society. Wise Statesmen hold it for a Maxim, That the chief security of a Sovereign is in his being Master of the Hearts and Affections of his Subjects, which will draw with them their Hands and Purse as need shall require. But Mankind being so subject to a variety of Passions, which by an unruly vicissitude possess the Minds, especially of the giddy multitude, there can be no assurance in this, unless somewhat that is more fixed and better grounded, tie subjects to the Duty they owe the Sovereign Power. And therefore those who have attempted God and designed to discharge Men of the sense of a Deity, or the apprehensions of another Life, are the greatest Enemies to Authority: Their Blood and Extraction may perhaps entitle them to Honour and a high Quality, but their Maxims destroy all Honour, and would quickly bring on a levelling of all Qualities. He were, by the confession of all, highly criminal, who would question the King's Title to the Crown, or offer to void his Right; and yet this is the Crime of those Insulting Hectors: For if there

be no God, then that Sacred and Royal Reputation of Sovereign Power, which Princes derive from him, who is the Original of it, *by whom Kings Reign*, is out of doors: This levels the Prince with the Subject, and gives the Usurper as good a Title as the lawful Sovereign can claim.

I shall not now engage in a long discourse of Policy, nor examine the Original of Power, nor the Measures and Limits of it, nor the Nature and Extent of the Subjection we owe Authority; much less run out in a long Digression of the Obligation of Conscience: but shall limit my Discourse to one single point, That Conscience is the great security of a State, the Spring of Obedience, and the sure *basis* of Submission. And in opening up this I shall,

1. Shew that Conscience doth choak and stifle the occasions and causes of Commotions in their first Conceptions.

2. That it drives the sense of Duty and the obligation to Obedience deeper on our Minds than any other consideration whatsoever.

3. That it gives the strongest Arguments for convincing our Reason, and the most engaging Motives for prevailing on our Affections, to pay the Duties of Subjection to those God hath set over us. And,

4. I shall encounter and put out of the way a formidable Objection, which may offer it self in prejudice of what I am to deliver.

For the first, it is certain, that as the great Diseases of our Bodies are not so much the Effects of outward Accidents as of bad Humours, to which a *crisis* may be given by some foreign Impression, which may put them in a ferment, and so endanger our Health: Thus the distempers of the Body Politick owe their beginnings and growth to some ill Humours in it, and the real Causes of Commotions are seldom the same with these that are pretended for training in and engaging a Multitude; for, *from whence come wars and fightings among us, but from our lusts that war in our members?* I shall therefore consider some of those Lusts and distempered Affections from which Commotions may arise, that I may shew how Religion, and it only, can secure Government from their bad Effects. Time will not allow me to make good all I am to say from History; but those who know Mankind will easily see the dependence of these Effects from the Causes I go to name, and such as have read History will find the Confirmation of it so clear, that I may well be excused the labour of adducing particular proofs in so plain a case.

1. But

1. But to stand no longer on Generals :
 One great occasion of Commotions is an un-
 bounded and aspiring Ambition which makes
 many swell big in their own conceit, and they
 measuring themselves by what they appear in
 the glass of their own enchanted Imagination,
 which both multiplies and magnifies all that is
 eminent in them, expect that all the World
 should court them with the same admiration
 which they pay themselves. Now it is a hard
 thing to satisfy the pretensions of all these lofty
 Aspirers, nor can any State be able to gratify
 them all ; since nothing falls, to which many se-
 veral Competitors do not put in a claim : And
 though there be many Corrivals, only one car-
 ries the prize, the rest being all big with a good
 opinion of themselves, and provoked at the
 unjust preference, as they imagine it, do upon
 that think how to make themselves considerable
 at their cost, who they judge consider them
 too little, and set up for some pretence to draw
 a Party, and make a Faction. But those
 mighty men in their own conceits are not at
 quiet when they have gained what they did at
 first pretend to, as that which would termi-
 nate their ambition, but make use of it as a step
 to mount them higher ; and thus creep up
 through all Degrees ; and perhaps when they
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are as high as can consist with the character of a Subject, do not rest there, but when they are become first Ministers, will next design to juggle their Master from his Throne. For Ambition is as the Grave unsatisfied, but ever says, *Give, give*. This being so great an evil, let us see what curb can be found for stopping its career. It will soon appear, that all the Arts of Government cannot do it; Religion is that alone which teaches us to discharge our selves of this Tympany, whose swellings are so incurable. Our Saviour hath commanded us *to* S. Matth. 11. 29. *learn of him, who was lowly in heart*; his Apostles charge us, *That in lowliness of mind we esteem others* Phil 2. 3. *better than our selves, That we humble our selves in the sight of God, and be clothed with humility as with a garment.* 1 S. Pet. 5. 5. And indeed this blessed Doctrine does no sooner prevail on us, but it changes that blind value and fondness we have for our selves, into a profound unaffected Humility, that represents our Faults and Defects as clear to us, as our former Vanity did our supposed Excellencies; and instead of vast towerings, brings us under great Contrition, deep Self-denial, and an humble mistrust of our selves; and thus Conscience obliges us to be subject, by setting out of the way this great provocation to disorder.

The Case
of the
Duke of
Guise in
Henry the
Thirds
time.

2. Another Cause to which not a few of the Distempers of Societies owe their Rise and Growth, is the heat and fury of mens Passions, which being once kindled by their pride, and blown on by many outward accidents, at length become so fierce and violent, that no Banks can resist their torrent, but they sweep all before them. Some are born under the disadvantage of ill Nature and a Cholerick Disposition; and if these meet any provocation (which must needs fall out often; for as a tender Body doth soon feel pain, so an ill disposed Mind is quickly disquieted) their heated Spirits are all in a Fever, and they either swell with Rage, fret with Envy, or boil with Revenge: And thus are their thoughts set to work, how to drudge happily under the severe bondage of their tyrannical Passions. One perhaps to be revenged on some triumphing Favorite, whom he can overtake no easier way, will be ready to drive all to confusion, to comply with his disquieting Malice: Another that is not so much in bondage himself to those ill-natured Passions, yet being captivated with the Charms of a fair, but imperious and spiteful Mistress, must give himself up as the instrument of all her ill Nature, and, being distracted with the extravagant Notions of Knight-errantry,

errantry, thinks himself bravely gallant, when he has sacrificed all things to her wicked Resentments. Private Animosities are known to have had a larger share in publick distempers, than any will willingly own; and this must needs be so still, if there be no assured means for qualifying the heat, and tempering the Passions of Men: For no Government can be so well ballanced, but that many will find themselves aggrieved by it, or by those who manage it; and if upon these irritations we ask counsel at our blinded and misled Passions, we may be well assured they will ever drive us into all the excesses of Fury and Confusion. How excellent then must this Divine Discipline be, which tames the wildness, and smooths the roughness of our unpolished Natures, teaching us *to put off wrath, anger, malice, blasphemy, and evil communication out of our mouths*; and, instead of those, moulds us into a Divine temper, like our meek Master, obliging us *to forbear one another, and forgive one another, as he has done us*: For that Divine Wisdom which he taught the World, *is first pure, then peaceable, gentle and easie to be entreated*. It no sooner gets into our breasts, but it dulcifies our Choler, qualifies the bitterness of our Gall, and gives us the possession of our Minds, out of which nothing

Col. 3. 8.

Col. 3. 13.

S. Jam. 3. 17.

can turn us; and transforms us from that ravenous Temper into a Dove-like disposition, and, instead of these boiling thoughts, which do ferment, gives the quiet serenities of a good Conscience and servent Charity; so that we are no more Sons of Thunder, but Children of Love, and do no more bluster out in Passion, but from the Calm of a cool Spirit do breathe out soft and gentle Affections: And if of a sudden a storm arise within us, our Consciences will at once both arraign, condemn and kill these Passions that raise it, and thus teacheth us to be subject, by destroying these passions that do both marre our own Quiet, and endanger the Publick Peace.

3. Another Occasion that hath engaged many into seditious Courses, hath been the narrowness of their Fortunes; to which they, not understanding the Philosophy of contracting their desires, which is the safer and easier course, studied by all means whatsoever to enlarge them so as to satisfy the Vanities and Prodigalities of an undiscreeet Expence. As the turbulent Youth of *Athens* advised his Uncle, finding him busied to prepare his accounts, rather to study how to make none at all. Those people think they drive a sure Trade, for they can lose little, and may gain much; therefore

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are ready to embark in the most desperate Designs, hoping to fish some advantage from troubled waters. Their Small Fortunes joyned with their gaping desires, are ever setting a new edge on their ulcerated Spirits, and none are so furious as these, who pinched with want and cold, and armed by despair, must do or die: If the ordinary Course of Law and Justice go on, they are undone; but the disordering these, does both relieve them from ruine, and feed them with some hopes. Now no treasure can answer the demands of all ravenous devourers, who *cannot dig, and are ashamed to beg*; nor can the greatest exactness of care reach every Individual of a State, or oblige them to an expence proportioned to their Fortune, much less to limit their desires to it; but still there be many Prodigals, who out-run themselves, and those are often men of brisk Tempers and ungoverned Appetites: In what disorder then must Government be, if this cannot be repressed? Perhaps in an evener Tract of Peace and Plenty, when Order and Authority maintain their Reputation, such dissolute wasters of their Fortunes cannot prove so considerable, as to disturb the Peace of a Nation: But all States are subject to Accidents that weaken them, and the Censures of an unruly

B 2

multitude

S Math.
5-25, 34.

multitude will often blast the Reputation of the best Government. And at some such disadvantage these untoward Male-contents may catch an opportunity of doing much mischief; how great a happiness then is it to any Nation to embrace and obey that Religion which teaches us, *Not to take thought what we shall eat, drink, or put on*, that disbands the solitudes about to morrow, and the anxious cares that oppress weaker minds; our holy Faith teaching us, that *we are pilgrims on Earth, as all our Fathers were*, calls up our thoughts above the depressions of sense, to feed our selves with the assured hopes of approaching Glory and Happiness in another state, which does so entirely swallow up the sense of any present Trouble, that it leaves no other impression on us, but to make us long to be gone beyond these shadows of Mortality and false appearances of Happiness, which do now impose on our bewitched minds, and seduce us into a thousand Errors and Follies. And thus again we see how Conscience stifles the very first motions of disorder, and teaches us to be subject.

4. A fourth Occasion of disorder, is a busie meddling Temper, that cannot contain its self within its own Limits and Sphere, but will engage in things beyond its understanding, and
above

above its reach: Some cannot stay at home and do their own business, but must ramble abroad, and insinuate themselves on all Affairs and Company, and are ever gaping for some change, hoping it may make way for their appearing in another figure: These are ever sucking in ill Reports, which they are sure to belch up again in all Companies, not without additions. They delight to asperse Governours and Government, and either to find or make faults in every thing that is done, and a volatile unfixedness of disposition makes them weary of established Laws and Customs, and gape for Changes through a fond affectation of Novelty. Now these Vermine creeping into all Companies, must certainly weaken the Nerves and Sinews of Government: and most attempts for repressing this humour make it boil with the greater vehemence: But, as the Wiseman instructed us of old, *To fear God, and honour the King, and not to meddle with those that were given to change; and not to say, Why were the former days better than these, for we do not enquire wisely concerning that matter*: So the doctrine of the Gospel commands every man, *To do his own business, to stay at home, not to be a busie-body, nor meddle in other mens affairs, but to pay tribute to whom tribute is due; fear, to whom fear; and honour, to whom*

Prov. 24.
26.

Eccles. 7.
10.

1 Thess. 4.
11.
1 S. Pet. 4.
15.

Rom. 13. 7

whom honour is due. These being the Rules of Religion, I may appeal all the World to shew anything can so settle Order and Authority, as this which guards against the first appearances of Clouds and Storms.

But as Conscience doth meet the earliest beginnings of disorders in their less discernible and more plausible colours, so it ties a man to that severe conduct of himself, that he cannot embark in Designs which must be managed with so much fraud and dissimulation, as the contrivers of wicked courses must needs carry along with them in all their practices: Pretending the highest respect, when they mean worst, lying, and forswearing, and sometimes assassinating, as it may serve their ends, and never meaning what they say, nor saying what they mean, but shuffling and warping as Interest carries them. Nor can wicked Projects appear at first barefaced, lest they should be entertained with horror by all to whom they are proposed, but must go masked, till they be so strong, as to dare to throw off the disguise: Nay, Religion will be perhaps called in to serve a turn, and Scriptures wrested to a favourable construction; all this base and foul dealing will so wound a tender and sincere Conscience, that it will either contract a hardness

ness and *callus*, and become proof against all these awakenings; or pull a man out of these base Courses that must be carried on by so bad Methods; for there is nothing so candid as Conscience, and therefore *S. Paul* chargeth us *not to lye one to another, since we have put off the old* Col. 3. 9. *man with his deeds, and have put on the new man*; for he that does all things as in the sight of God, can do nothing that he fears should be seen or known of men. And thus I have dispatched the First part of my Design, that Conscience obliges us to Subjection, by resisting all the first Motions that lead to Disorder or Confusion.

2. Nor does it only put out of the way those dangerous Stumbling-blocks, but it drives the sense of Duty deep into our Minds. Law and Government can only watch over the Actions and Words of Subjects, but can neither discover nor over-rule their Thoughts, which a cautious man wrapping up within himself can reserve to a fit opportunity; but Conscience insinuates the Duty we owe the Sovereign Power upon our secretest thoughts; and Religion obliges us *not to curse the King in our thoughts*; and Eccles. 11. 20. has made the Duty we pay Authority a part of its self, and of these returns of the holy Fear and humble Obedience, we owe the great King
of

of Kings. But this must not be so far carried, as if those who are vested with the Sovereign Power, had Authority to command us to embrace whatever Religion they enjoy, according to the pestiferous spawn of that Infernal Leviathan, who by this Assertion doth at once destroy both Religion and Government. For that base Flatterer of Princes, pretending to offer them more than was due to them, hath struck at the Root of their Authority, and at once robbed them of all their Rights: For we are either bound to obey the Sovereign by some obligation the Law of God brings on us; or not; If not, then all the Sacredness of Authority is gone, and the Prince has nothing but Force to maintain his Right, and every Ulurper that Masters him shall have a better Right, by how much more Power he has to strengthen his ambitious Pretensions. But if we be bound by the Laws of God to obey the Supreme Power, then these Laws had a *prior* Title to our Obedience, and infer the Duties of Subjects as a particular Effect of their Doctrine: Therefore these Laws having the first Right to our Obedience must oblige us. Nor can we be allowed to pick out that one, of obeying the Magistrate, and leave the rest behind us; for all the Laws of God being enacted by the same Authority

Authority must equally bind us; and as no deputed Magistrate can void the Laws of the Supreme Power, so neither can Princes void the Laws of God without sopping the Foundations of their own Authority. But none of these magnifyings of Magistracy are necessary to make it great; it being by God himself exalted to so culminating a height, and the rendering to God the things that are God's, does not prejudice *Cesar* in the things that are *Cesar's*: But Religion engages us to so full an Obedience to the Laws, that our violating them, when they contradict no Command of God's, makes us guilty in his sight; and though we disguise what we do with so much cunning, that the Secular Power can fix no Censure on us, yet our Consciences will accuse us before God for those secret Transgressions which no humane Care can discover. There is a Tribunal set up by God for the Magistrate in all our Breasts, which will pass Sentence severely, and not be put off by the tricks of Law, the boldness of Denials, the cunning of Excuses, or any other Arts that may impose upon, or abuse such Judges, who must proceed upon clear evidence, and not on dubious conjectures: But when a man is retired inward, and his Conscience takes him to task, then all these visors

1 Tim. 2.
1, 2.

are pulled off, and he must needs appear in the foul colours of guilt. Another Method by which Conscience binds on us the sense of Duty and Subjection to those set over us, is the Obligation to pray for them, according to that great Rubrick of Prayer S. Paul gives, *I exhort therefore that first of all supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, for Kings and all that are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty: which whosoever is a Christian must needs observe.* This then must every day awaken and keep alive the sense of Duty to those over us, so that if we have been prevailed on to undutiful courses, when we retire to our Devotions, this must certainly open our eyes to discern and repent of our faults; for if we pray, and act contradictions, then we either mock God, by praying for that we do not desire, and which we study to destroy; or we act most impiously in opposition to that we judge our selves bound to pray for: And every man, whose Conscience is not strangely asleep, will soon discover this double dealing in himself, if he pray against what he acts, and be acting against his Prayers. Thus it appears, that Conscience brings the sense of our Duty to the Sovereign Power nearer us, and to closer conflicts with our daily thoughts,

thoughts, and forceth upon us a frequent review of them. Nor is this a blind and brutish Subjection to which Conscience ties us, but it binds it on us with the fullest evidence of Reason.

3. And this is the third Particular, to which my Design now leads me, wherein I am to lay out those Arguments that Conscience and the Doctrines of Christianity offer for this Subjection we must pay the Magistrates. I shall not meddle with those Reasons that may be drawn from the Rules of Humane Policy, the Nature of Societies, the Origine and Ends of Magistracy, but shall confine my Discourse to those which natural and revealed Religion do offer for obliging us to Subjection to the higher Powers.

1. And first of all, we are taught that these Powers are of God, that they are *the Ordinance of God*, his Deputies, Ministers and Vicegerents, *That have the Sword of Justice put in their hands by him, for the punishment of evil doers, and the encouragement of those that do well*; and he himself hath said, *They are Gods*; a strain of speech, Ver. 1, 2, 3.
Psal. 82. 6.
 that, if Divine Authority did not warrant it, would pass for impudent and blasphemous Flattery: Though then the Powers that are over us be clothed with our Natures, and are

subject to like Passions and Infirmities with us, and live and die like men, yet for all that we must look on them as Sacred and Divine by their Character. The severe Respect that Conscience enjoyns us to pay Authority appears in the Instance of *David*, who, though pursued by *Saul* with all the violence and injustice of Oppression and Cruelty, yet when he had him in his hands, and offered him the small affront of *cutting off the hem of his garment, his heart smote him for it*: This was a Character of a man according to God's heart. Deputed Powers are only accountable to those from whom they derive their Authority; so the higher Powers, being deputed by God, must indeed render to him a severe account of their administration, but not to others; we are therefore *to obey them for the Lords sake, and to be subject to them for Conscience-sake.*

1 Sam. 24.
4, 5, 6.

1 S. Pet. 2.
13.

2. Another consideration that obligeth to Subjection, which Religion offers, is the steady and firm belief of the Government of the World, by that Unerring Providence that wisely maintains that great Fabrick and vast Frame of Beings, which it self raised out of nothing. We are apt upon the first appearances of things to judge rashly, even before we have seen all the sides and secrets of humane Coun-

Counfels, which would often alter our thoughts very much from our over-forward Judgments: But the secrets of the Divine Counfels lie hid from all the living, and yet the long experience which the Oeconomy of the World offers us, may juſtly convince us, that we are not to paſs ſentence haſtily, and that often thoſe things which did look moſt cloudy, and threatned ſome diſmal Conſequences, did by the ſecret Governings of that Supreme Mind, produce Effects very different from thoſe that not without great probabilities were feared: This therefore muſt clear the Melancholy of our diſcouraged and dejected minds, and diſſipate thoſe thick miſts of fears and jealousies which might otherwiſe damp and diſhearten us. He that gave the Laws to Day and Night, and can reverse theſe when he will; that taught the whole Frame of Nature thoſe Motions they obſerve, and yet can force the Sun both to ſtop and to give ground when he will; and can make the Sea to rife up in hills, is able to extricate the darkeſt and moſt involved Ravelings of Second Cauſes. We are therefore ſecure, knowing, *That all things work together for good to them that love God*; believing that his Providence watcheth over his Church, and all that truſt in him, ſo that not a hair of their head falls

Rom. 8. 28

to the ground without his care, and that he hath given his Angels charge to encamp about and Minister to the heirs of Salvation; and this may well supersede our fears, and throw off the anxieties of all perplexing thoughts, and compose our minds to an humble Subjection to those God hath brought us under. I know some may think I plead here the stupidity of Fate, which must needs dishearten and slacken all good Intentions and Designs; but we are to consider the Order God hath fixed in the Government of the World, and the particular station wherein he hath placed and posted us, out of which we are not to stir on the pretence of heroical excitations; which, when examined, will be found the heats of a warm Fancy, or the swellings of an elevated Mind that distrust the Providence of God, as if he were not able to compass his designs, and therefore he must stretch out his hands to help him, labouring under too great a load; which is indeed the language of all those who pretending zeal for his Service, do step out of their station, and meddle with matters that are too high for them. The fate of *Uzzah* should have taught us both more Wisdom and Religion, who seeing the Ark of God shake, and considering how dismal an Omen the overturning that sacred Repository had been,

been, and how disgraceful and impious it would be to see those precious Symbols of the Divine Presence laid in the dust; and, not remembering that none but the Family of *Aaron* might touch those holy Mysteries, put out his hand to hold them, but was struck dead on the place. We are rather to look on and adore the hidden Traces and Methods of the Divine Counsels, and patiently to wait for that Issue of things, which notwithstanding of all the disorders may at any time appear in humane affairs, the Eternal Wisdom of that Architectonical Mind will in due time bring forth, and in the mean while rest satisfied in all he does, commending things in our prayers to him, and doing every thing that befits our Condition for preserving Peace, Order and Religion, but going no further, for the *wrath of man doth not work out the righteousness of God*. And thus Conscience, fixing our Subjection on the unshaken basis of our Faith and Confidence in God, binds us by the strongest Ties to our Duty.

S. Jam. 1.
20.

3. A third Argument Conscience offers to oblige us to be subject and quiet, is the fervent and extended Charity it possesseth us with to all Mankind, which must needs hold us from engaging in courses that will prove destructive to a great part of it : Where we consider what
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the mischiefs of Rebellion and Civil War are, what Dissolution of Government and Confusion of Justice it brings after it, how much Bloud and Rapine, Oppression, Plunder and Profanation of the most Sacred things, are the certain Effects of Commotions, if they be long-lived, what Lover of Mankind or Person truly charitable will engage in courses so black, whose *Catastrophe* may prove so tragical, and run far beyond what was at first designed, and produce Effects far more mischievous than those that were complained of? How many dispeopled Cities, depopulated and burnt Villages; what Tears of Widows and Orphans, and of Aged Persons bereft of their Children, who were the comfort and support of their Age must follow on such courses, when the fields are covered with the Carcasses of the dead, and the Scaffolds smok with the bloud of Innocents, and that not only with common Gore, but Royal and Sacred Bloud? A pathetick and florid Eloquence could easily manage this Theme with those advantages, as to raise horror in all at Courses so barbarous and unchristian, which the common Sentiments of Humanity will make those of softer and relenting Tempers hate, much more the meek and peaceable Christians. And that these are not the Melancholy
 represen-

representations of a troubled Fancy; a little Reflexion on what we have seen and known, and a penetrating prospect into what may be before us will easily make out to all considering Minds: Therefore strong and fervent Charity to Mankind will prove a certain curb to repress new attempts at those disorders, the Effects whereof are not yet old, nor out of mind. And here again Conscience obliges us to be subject.

4. The last Consideration which I shall propose, by which Conscience binds us to Subjection, *is the Practice and Example of our great Master, who was made perfect through sufferings;* Heb. 2. 10. the whole course of his Life was a perpetual Tract of doing good and bearing ill; he paid the Tribute, when demanded, and charged the *Jews to render to Caesar the things that were Caesars:* S. Matth. 22. 21. And when he was to lay down his life for us, he submitted himself patiently, not only to the will of his Heavenly Father, but to the Civil Powers which then governed in *Judaea:* Though he, as the Heir of all things, might have claimed the Empires of the World as his Right, yet since he humbled himself so as to be born in the low character of a Subject, he in that, as in all other things, became a perfect Pattern to us of all Righteousness. When the
D accursed

S. Matth.
26.5.

S. John 18.
36.

accursed Band came out against him, though he could have brought down Legions of Angels for his relief, yet he not only submitted himself to them, but both rejected and reprov'd S. Peter's too forward zeal, and told him, *That such as drew the sword should perish by the sword*; and when the ill-guided fervour of that great Apostle had mislead him to the excess of imitating with the Sword, our Saviour expressed his displeasure at it, by his miraculous piecing the Ear again with the maimed Head. And when he was accused to Pilate of being an Enemy to Caesar, and pretending to set up another Kingdom, he did in the plainest stile was possible condemn all *praefisings* against Government upon pretence of Religion, by saying, *My Kingdom is not of this world; if my Kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews, but now is my Kingdom not from hence*: This doth so expressly discharge all bustling and fighting on the pretence of Religion, that we must either set up for another Gospel, or utterly reject what is so formally condemned by the Author of this we profess to believe. And never Cause of Religion was of so great concern, as the preserving the Head and Author of it, whom with equal mixtures of Injustice and Violence his enraged Enemies were against all colours

lours of Equity, and contrary to Law and Religion, dragging to that death, which, though it proved the happiest thing to Mankind, yet on their part who acted it, was the foulest Crime the Sun ever saw.

The blessed Apostles followed their Masters steps in this, as in all other things; and therefore having learned of our Saviour that lesson of bearing the Cross, and suffering patiently, when Injustly persecuted, counted it their glory to be conformable to him in his sufferings; and indeed, if we examine the Nature and Design of that holy Religion our Saviour delivered, we will find nothing more diametrically opposite to all its Rules, than the distempered fury of these misguided Zealots, who being carried on by the fierceness of their Ungoverned Passions, have, upon colours of Religion, filled the World with Bloud and Confusion. Otherwise does *S. Paul* teach the *Romans* in this Chapter, though then groaning under the severest rigours of Bondage and Tyranny; and *S. Peter* doth at full length once and again call on all Christians to prepare for sufferings, and to bear them patiently; and though the bondage of the slaves was heavy and highly contrary to all the freedoms of the humane Nature, yet he exhorts them to bear the severities, *even*

1 *S. Pet.* 2.
13. ver. to
the end,
and 3. 14.
15. 16. 17.
verses.

of their froward and unjust Maslers, with this Argument, *That Christ suffered for them, leaving them an example, that they should follow his steps.* From these unerring Practises and Precepts must all true Christians take the measures of their Actions, and the Rules of their Life: And indeed the first Converts to Christianity embraced the Cross, and bore it not only with Patience, but Joy; and as long as Christianity continued pure and unallayed, this Doctrine of patient suffering was not only a big and empty boast, but gave proofs of its Reality, by the unexampled Patience and Sufferings of the Christians in a succession of Three Ages and Ten Persecutions. These blessed Witnesses of our Faith were burning and shining Lights, as well by the Purity of their Lives, as by the Stakes and Flames of their Martyrdom. Nero unpalled them, and clothing them with Pitch-coats, made burn them as Torches in the night; but these Fires scattered the darkness of that Night of Idolatry in which *Rome* lay buried, and both enlightned and inflamed many that lay freezing in darkness. It was the astonishment of the World to see such numbers of all Ages, Sexes, and Qualities, with that alacrity and chearfulness of Submission, offer up their Lives for the Faith; and neither the Cruelty of their unre-

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lenting Persecutors, nor the continued Tract
 of their Miseries, which did not end but with
 their days, prevailed on them either to renounce
 the Faith, or do that which is next degree to it,
 throw off the Cross, and betake themselves to
 seditious Practices for their preservation, but
 continued stedfast both in their Faith and Pati-
 ence, by which they inherited the Promises.
 Nor was Christianity endamaged by all that fu-
 ry; on the contrary, the Blood of the Martyrs
 was the Seed of the Church, whole Field being
 thus sated, did spring up thirty, sixty and a
 hundred fold; so that for every new harvest of
 a persecution, there was a plentiful crop of
 Christians. And there is no reason to think
 these blessed Martyrs endured all their suffer-
 ings, constrained by necessity, because they
 could do no other; for as we find in the in-
 spired History, that at two Sermons there were
 Eight thousand Converts, so Profane as well
 as Ecclesiastical Writers assure us, the numbers
 of the Christians became very soon so vast, that
 nothing but the Conscience of the Duty they
 owed the Supreme Powers obliged them to be
 subject. *Pliny*, who lived a hundred years after
 our Saviour wrote to *Trajan*, *That in Pontus and*
Bithynia there were great numbers of Christians of all
Ranks, both in Cities and Villages, so that the Temples
 of

Lib. 10.

Ep. 97.

of their Gods were by the prevailing Growth of Christianity, left desolate. A little after him *Marcus Aurelius* had a Legion of Christians in his Army, of whom he gives this Character in his Edict, *That they carried God in their Consciences*; and when there were so many in the Army, we may on a fair computation reckon their numbers to have been very great. Not long after that does *Tertullian* plead for those in his days, in his admired Apologetick, and tells the *Romans*, *That if they would stand to their own defence, they wanted not the strength of Numbers and Armies, that neither the Moors nor Parthians, nor any other of the Nations that fought with the Romans could match them, who filled the whole World, all their places, Towns, Islands, Castles, Villages, Councils, Camps, Tribes, Senate and Market-places*; only they abandoned their Temples to them; adding, *That to what War were they not both fit and ready, even though they were less numerour, who were butchered so willingly, if their Discipline did not allow them rather to be killed than to kill?* And elsewhere he vindicates the Christians, *That none of them were ever found guilty of conspiracies against the Emperors, whom they acknowledged to be set up by God, and therefore judged themselves bound to love, reverence and honour them.* But as the Christian Religion continued to spread by a vast and prodigious increase, so did the spite of the Infernal Furies grow

Cap. 37.

Ad Scap.
c. 2.

grow fierce against it by the same proportion; and in the last Persecution, which continued about twenty years, we find the Martyrs of one Province (*Egypt*) reckoned to be betwixt eight and nine hundred thousand; and yet no tumults were raised against all this Tyranny and Injustice: And though after that the Emperors turned Christian, and established the Faith by Law, yet neither did the subtil attempts of *Julian* the Apostate, nor the open Persecutions of some *Arrian* Emperors, who did with great violence prosecute the Orthodox, occasion any seditious Combinations against Authority. These are the great Precedents this holy Doctrine of the Cross hath in the first and purest Ages, and though Religion suffered great Decays in the succession of many Ages, yet for the first ten Centuries no Father or Doctor of the Church, nor any Assembly of Church-men, did ever teach, maintain or justify any Rebellions or seditious Doctrines or Practises.

4. And thus I have made good what I undertook to evince, That Conscience doth with the greatest evidence of Reason and Authority, bind us to an absolute Subjection to the Higher Powers; and have observed what was the Path our blessed Saviour himself followed, the Traces whereof are to be known by those bloody steps

steps he hath left behind him for our Example and Instruction. We have also seen a glorious Cloud of Witnesses following him in the same way he both opened up and consecrated to them. But after all this, it may be perhaps objected, That all Christians, at least all pretenders to it, have not followed the same Rule, and that some Divisions of Christendom, which in all other things run very wide from one another, yet meet in this Doctrine of resisting the Supreme Authority, and not only so, but they vouch Religion for their Warrant and their Quarrel both, and pretend a Zeal for God, his Church, and his Cause in all they do: This is the last part of my Discourse, to which I obliged my self in the beginning; and I will handle it with the round plainness that such a Point, how tender soever some may think it, requires. It is true, about the end of the Eleventh Century this pestiferous Doctrine took its Rise, and was first broached and vented by Pope *Gregory* the Seventh, commonly called *Hildebrand*, the first Pope of that name; though a far better man had basely and shamefully courted the cruel and perfidious *Phocas*, and treated him in a stile of mean and sordid Flattery that misbecame any man, much more so great a Bishop. But the Pope I now speak of went
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more briskly to work, and begun that insolent and bold pretension of the Temporal power of the Popes over all Kings and Princes; that they being Christ's Vicars on Earth, must have all Power in Heaven and Earth deputed to them, and that as *S. Peter's* Successors they had the two Swords, the Spiritual and the Temporal put in their hands. Upon this he aspired and exalted himself above those whom the Scripture calleth Gods. Nor did this rest in a bare speculation, but any that will read his Epistles, and knows the History of his Life, will see what dismal confusions he brought on *Germany* and *Italy*, and laid the Foundations of those bloody Wars which followed and continued for some Ages: Then did the Factions of the *Guelphs* and *Gibellins* divide Nations, Towns and Families, and fill all places with blood and confusion. How other Popes did afterwards set the same pretensions on foot, both in *France*, *England*, and in many other places, is well enough known to all that are acquainted with History; and for two or three Ages the Tyranny of this was so heavy, that any Insolent Church-man was able to disturb Government, by carrying Complaints to *Rome* of some pretended Inroachments on the Ecclesiastical Immunity; upon which Monitory

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Breves and Bulls were dispatched from *Rome*, and every Prince was either to obey these, how much soever they might prejudice his Government, or to look for the Thunders of Excommunication, Deposition, absolving his Subjects from their Oaths of Fidelity, and the transferring his Dominions on some other more zealous Votary of that See. And any that will read the Decretals, Bulls and Breves of many of the aspiring Popes, will find that these were not only ambitious and disclaimed practises, the guilt of which being personal, died with themselves; but they founded them on the Rights of the See of *Rome*, and in the stile of an Universal Pastor imposed the belief of that on the World. Now I would presume to ask any of that Communion, if they believe these Popes were Infallible in those Decisions and Instructions they imposed on the World, or not? If any say they were *Infallible* in them, they are without more ceremony of words, Traitors, who subject our Sovereign's Rights, which he derives from God only, to a foreign Superior Power: If they were not Infallible in these Decisions, then what is become of the Pope's Infallibility? For the present Pope can have no more than his Predecessors had; and if they erred, he may likewise erre. But I must ad-

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vance this a little farther, to shew that those of that Communion, though they reject the Popes Infallibility, yet if they submit to the Infallibility of their General Councils, are still in the same hazards of being Rebels: For the Council of *Lateran*, which in the *Roman* Church is held General and Oecumenical, that first decreed Transubstantiation, did also by the Third of its Canons decree, *That all temporal Princes should exterminate* (I shall not critically examine that word which must amount to banishment at least) *all Hereticks*; adding, *That if any Temporal Lord, being admonished by the Church, did neglect to purge his Lands, he should be first excommunicated, and if he continued in his contempt and contumacy, a years notice was to be given of it to the Pope, who thenceforth should declare his Vassals absolved from the Fidelity they owed him, and expose his Lands to be Invaded by Catholicks, who might possess it without any contradiction, having exterminated the Hereticks out of it, and preserve it in the Purity of the Faith.* This is so plain, that I suppose without any hesitation it may be called a down-right Conspiracy against all Sovereign Princes; and this being decreed by a General Council, must either be Infallibly true, or the Foundation on which they have raised all their Superstructure of the Infallibility of their General Councils, is overturned.

But the same Equality of Justice and Freedom, that obliged me to lay open this, ties me to tax also those who pretend a great heat against *Rome*, and value themselves on their abhorring all the Doctrines and Practises of that Church, and yet have carried along with them one of their most pestiferous Opinions, pretending Reformation when they would bring all under Confusion, and vouching the Cause and Work of God, when they were destroying that Authority he had set up, and opposing those impowred by him: And the more Piety and Devotion such daring pretenders put on, it still brings the greater stain and imputation on Religion, as if it gave a Patrociny to those Practises it so plainly condemns. This is *Judas*-like, to kiss our Master when we betray him, and to own a Zeal for Religion when we engage in courses that disgrace and destroy it.

But, blessed be God, our Church hates and condemns this Doctrine from what hand soever it come, and hath established the Rights and Authority of Princes on sure and unalterable Foundations, enjoyning an entire Obedience to all the lawful Commands of Authority, and an absolute Submission to that Supreme Power God hath put in our Sovereign's hands. This Doctrine we justly glory in, and if any that had
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their Baptism and Education in our Church have turned Renegades from this, they proved no less enemies to the Church her self, than to the Civil Authority. So that their Apostasie leaves no blame on our Church, which glories in nothing more than in a well-tempered Reformation from the later Corruptions which the dark Ages brought in, to the pure and Primitive Doctrines which our Saviour and his Apostles taught, and the first Christians retained and practised for many Ages.

To Resume all then : Let us adorn our holy Profession with a Life suitable to it, and let us shew to the World, that we take not up, nor maintain our Religion upon Interest, but found it on sure and unmoveable Foundations, which, being the same always, will ever oblige us to the same Duties and Practises. Let us study to empty our selves of all big self-conceiting Thoughts, of all hot and inflamed Passions and Appetites, of all unruly and unbounded Desires, of all Levity and unstayedness of mind ; that with humble Hearts, calm Minds, contented Spirits, and steady Thoughts, every one may follow the Duties of his Station, and contain himself within it as becomes a Christian, paying inwardly in our very thoughts that reverence we owe the Higher Powers, and offering up to
God

God the constant Tribute of our Prayers for them; considering they are God's Vicegerents, and by his own warrant are called Gods: And if the Conduct of Affairs do not suit our wishes or desires, yet for all that we are to trust to and depend on God's Providence, not daring once to think of attempting against the Lord's anointed, nor to engage in courses that may bring on so much mischief and confusion, but let us ever set before our eyes our blessed Saviour, *Who endured the Cross and despised the shame; who when he was reviled, reviled not again, and when he suffered, he threatened not, but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously:* And let us also consider that Cloud of Witnesses that followed him; *That so we may run with patience the race that is set before us,* and not look to or imitate the later practices of some distempered and degenerated Christians. And then we shall be an honour to our Profession, and give a credit to that Church wherein we were Born, Baptised and Instructed; when we shew that we are *subject, not only for Wrath, but for Conscience-sake.*

And to end as I begun; Let us with astonishment and wonder, contemplate the shining glories of our most holy Faith, which tends to raise Mankind to the highest pitch of true Greatness that his limited Nature can ascend to,
and

and as far excels all the attempts of Philosophy, or any other Religion whatsoever, as the bright Splendor of the Day doth the fainter Shinings of the Night. For nothing can be more the Interest of all men, than the receiving this Faith, which both secures a man in all his Rights, and obliges all others to pay him what ever is due from the Relations they stand in. Does a Father desire dutiful Children, or Children an affectionate Father? Make them good Christians, and they are sure of what they desire. Do Husband and Wife expect the Fidelity and Sacred performance of the Ties of Wedlock? This must certainly follow on their being good Christians. Do Masters desire honest and careful Servants, and Servants a just and gentle Master? Make them good Christians and they will prove such. Do all men desire to live by honest well-natured and affectionate Neighbours? Their being good Christians will certainly make them such. Do Subjects desire a good King? Let them pray that he be a good Christian, and then he shall certainly govern well; And do Kings desire good and obedient Subjects? Let them take care that they be good Christians, and then they will be Subject, *Not only for Wrath, but for Conscience-sake.*

Now to the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords, be all Honour, Praise and Glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

THE END.